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ABSTRACT

This chapter is part of a book that recounts the year's work at the Early Childhood Development Center (ECDC) at Texas A & M University-Corpus Christi. Rather than an "elitist" laboratory school for the children of university faculty, the dual-language ECDC is a collaboration between the Corpus Christi Independent School District and the university, with an enrollment representative of Corpus Christi's population. Asserting that bibliotherapy, the therapeutic use of books, can play an instrumental role in comprehensive school guidance programs, this chapter describes how ECDC school counselors promoted health care literacy using children's literature as part of a comprehensive developmental guidance program for very young children. Children's stories were used to promote a more positive sense of self, to help children learn about the world, and to help children cope with stress, as well as to provide insight into problems, affirm thoughts and feelings, stimulate discussion about problems, create an awareness that others have similar problems, provide solutions to problems, communicate new values and attitudes, and to help children find meaning in life. The chapter defines comprehensive developmental school guidance programs and emphasizes practical school counseling applications for engaging children and families in health care literacy. The chapter includes a 25-item annotated bibliography of children's books, 28 references, and appendices with lesson plans for "Oh, the Places You'll Go," "The Rainbow Fish," and "Pig Will and Pig Won't." (EV)

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Chapter 14

Use of Children's Literature in a Comprehensive School Guidance Program for Young Children

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Introduction

Bibliotherapy, the therapeutic use of books, can play an instrumental role in comprehensive school guidance programs. The purpose of this chapter is to describe how school counselors promoted healthcare literacy using children's literature as part of a comprehensive developmental guidance program for very young children. This chapter defines comprehensive developmental school guidance programs and emphasizes practical school counseling applications for engaging children and families in healthcare literacy. Sample guidance lessons and an annotated bibliography of useful books for counselors and teachers are included in the appendices.

Developmental guidance as defined by Myrick (1997): (a) is for all students, (b) has an organized and planned curriculum, (c) is sequential and flexible, (d) is an integrated part of the total school process, (e) involves all school personnel, (f) helps students learn more effectively and efficiently, and (g) includes counselors who provide counseling services and interventions. Other authors have supported developmental school counseling models in which counseling services are available to all students (e. g., Bailey, Deery, Gehrke, Perry & Whitledge, 1989; Borders & Drury, 1992; Carter, 1993; Hardesty & Dillard, 1994; McDowell & Sayger, 1992; Paisley & Borders, 1995; Paisley & Peace, 1995; Snyder & Daly, 1993; Stulac & Stanwyck, 1980). Paisley and Borders (1995) stated that appropriate school counseling programs should be comprehensive and developmental programs emphasizing primary prevention and promoting the healthy development of all students. O'Dell, Rak, Chermonte, Hamlin, and Waina (1996) defined developmental programs as programs that are available to all students and that improve competencies in personal, social, and career goal planning. This developmental approach affirms that guidance is for everyone and its purpose is to develop all students to their maximum potential.

Traditionally, comprehensive developmental guidance programs have addressed the educational, vocational, personal, and social (American School Counselor Association, 1992) needs of students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. Comprehensive guidance programs, however, have rarely been expanded to three- and four-year-old classrooms. At the Early Childhood Development Center (ECDC) on the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMUCC)

campus, the comprehensive developmental school counseling program was expanded to three- and four-year-old classrooms and included the use of children's literature to promote healthcare literacy. A number of counselors working in traditional K through 12 schools have incorporated children's literature into their guidance curriculum (Jackson, In Press). For example, *Oh, The Places You'll Go* by Dr. Seuss (1990) has been used in classroom guidance lessons for students moving from fifth to sixth grade as part of articulation (see Appendix A). In addition, counselors have utilized stories such as *Dinosaur Divorce* by Brown and Brown (1986) individually and with groups of students who have divorced parents. The documented use of literature by counselors with very young children, however, is rare.

In Texas, guidance programs are organized around the following components as defined by The Texas Education Agency (TEA, 1998): (1) guidance curriculum, (2) responsive services, (3) individual planning, and (4) system support. The guidance curriculum consists of activities such as teaching classroom guidance, assisting in teaching classroom guidance, or coordinating classroom guidance. Responsive services include activities such as counseling with individual students and small groups; consulting with parents, teachers, and administrators; coordinating with school and community personnel; and using referral and assessment processes to assist students. Individual planning involves activities such as guiding students through the development of educational, career, and personal plans, and interpreting assessment results with students and parents. System support consists of activities such as planning and evaluating the counseling program, supervising personnel, and planning standardized testing.

At the Early Childhood Development Center, children's literature was used during guidance curriculum, responsive services, and individual planning in a three- and four-year-old comprehensive developmental guidance program. Since 1916 when Samuel Crothers created the term bibliotherapy to refer to the therapeutic use of books, counselors have used books in therapy (Atwater & Smith, 1982; Smith & Burkhalter, 1987; Starker, 1988). Children's literature contains thousands of years of stories and emotions about families and society and, therefore, was a useful component in the school counseling program, especially a school counseling program for very young children. At the ECDC, two TAMUCC faculty members and five

counseling education practicum students used bibliotherapy with elementary students. More than 174 classroom sessions, lasting 30 minutes, were conducted. The practicum students spent approximately 400 hours per semester providing individual counseling, small group sessions, classroom guidance, consultation, and coordination. Counselors used children's stories in order to help children:

1. Develop a more positive sense of self
2. Learn about the world
3. Cope with stress
4. Provide insight into problems
5. Affirm thoughts and feelings
6. Stimulate discussion about problems
7. Create an awareness that others have similar problems
8. Provide solutions to problems
9. Communicate new values and attitudes
10. Find meaning in life (Pardeck, 1994)

Children learned about how to solve problems by observing the way characters in books solve problems. These observations assisted children in handling their own related problems. The interaction with a counselor while discussing these stories helped children gain valuable insights. School counselors, in this way, promoted healthcare literacy by using children's literature as part of a comprehensive developmental guidance program for very young children.

School counselors also used literature in classroom guidance activities. Stories such as *The Rainbow Fish* (Pfister, 1992) were used in classrooms to discuss interpersonal relationships (see Appendix B). *Pig Will and Pig Won't* (Scarry, 1995) was used to help three- and four-year-olds describe and discuss rules and why rules are necessary (see Appendix C).

Counselors shared selected books with individual students as part of responsive service activities. These books had themes related to the child's individual situation. For example, a counselor chose to read the story *Nine Candles* (Testa, 1996) with a child who had a parent in jail and *Zachary's New Home* (Blomquist, 1990) with a child who was in foster care.

Counselors also used related stories with teachers and parents as part of consultation, by suggesting relevant books, many of which are included in the annotated bibliography, for parents or teachers to read aloud with the child. During individual planning activities, counselors used literature that discussed personal, academic and career goals. Books such as *Oh, The Places You'll Go* (Seuss, 1990) and *Mr. Griggs' Work* (Rylant, 1989) helped very young children begin to explore career choices. Counselors used literature in a variety of ways in comprehensive guidance programs. These are some specific suggestions that counselors found useful when using literature with very young children (Disque & Langenbrunner, 1996):

1. Try to illicit comments about the story and encourage children to express thoughts about the content and characters. "What word comes to mind when you think of the story we read?"
2. Ask children to choose the book or character with whom they identify.
3. Use questions to facilitate reflection, such as, "What did you like about this story?" "If you could be like one of the characters in the story, whom would you choose? Why?" "What will you remember about this book?"
4. Help children make comparisons with experiences from their own lives and the story.
5. Ask questions such as: "Do you ever feel like that?" "Do you ever wish you were like that?" "What would you do if you were that character in the story?" "What do you do when you feel like that?" "Have you ever felt that mad (sad, scared, happy)?" "Do you wish you could do that when you get mad?"
6. Connect the book and characters with real-life experiences of the group/class. Have the class discuss similarities and differences among story/book characters. Discuss similarities between the children and characters in the book and identify desired behaviors. Discuss when they acted like that and when they didn't.
7. Have child/class identify changes in characters' feelings, relationships, or behaviors.

8. Discuss with child/class consequences of behaviors or feelings and discuss alternative solutions to characters problems.
9. Have children participate in the dramatic retelling of the story by drawing or painting scenes from the story, role playing various characters, creating puppets to re-enact the story events, or rewriting the story using a different ending.

Counselors implemented many of these suggestions while using literature with very young children at the ECDC. The following case studies illustrate three specific counseling interventions.

Intervention 1: Guidance Curriculum

School counselors created a classroom guidance lesson at the request of a teacher using the story *Pig Will and Pig Won't* (Scarry, 1995). The lesson was designed to help three- and four-year-old children develop and incorporate an understanding of the rights and responsibility of citizens. Children were first asked to define a rule. Next children were asked to describe the rules they must follow at home and at school. The counselor then shared the story of *Pig Will and Pig Won't* with the class. After telling the story of *Pig Will and Pig Won't*, the counselor introduced the Pig Will and Pig Won't puppets. Pig Will and Pig Won't puppets were made by the counselor prior to going to the classroom and had velcro mouths that could be changed from frowns to smiles (see Appendix C). Students were asked to volunteer to be Pig Will and Pig Won't and the counselor gave directives such as "Walk in the hallway," "Eat with your mouth closed," "Raise your hand to speak in group," "Wait your turn to speak," "Sit quietly in your seat," and "Use inside voices." Children playing with the Pig Will puppet were coached to respond to each directive by nodding their heads and saying, "I will." Children playing with the Pig Won't puppet were coached to respond to each directive by shaking their heads and saying, "I won't." After several directives were given, the class members were asked what kind of day they thought each of the pigs would be having. Children responded that Pig Won't would probably be having a bad day whereas Pig Will would probably be having a great day. Next, children were asked how Pig

Won't could turn his day around. The counselor then whispered to the child playing Pig Won't and told him to change his responses to "Me, too!" When the next directive was given and Pig Won't responded, "Me, too!" his frown became a smile and the counselor told the children how Pig Won't became known as Pig Me, Too! At the end of the lesson with the class, the counselor had each child come forward and hold Pig Will and tell one thing that they would do to cooperate at school during the rest of the day. Color sheets with Pig Will were also left with the teacher as a reinforcement activity. This lesson illustrates how counselors used children's literature as part of guidance curriculum activities in a comprehensive counseling program for very young children.

Intervention 2: Responsive Services

Counselors also used children's literature during individual and group counseling activities with three- and four-year-old children. Counselors followed these general guidelines during responsive services (Chatton, 1988):

1. Realize that children who do not like to read or do not know the pleasure of books may not be helped by bibliotherapy.
2. Read widely in order to be able to offer a range of books not necessarily on topics but on themes that may be healing for children suffering from all kinds of problems.
3. Trust children to select stories appropriate for their own healing and give them time to read.
4. Have lots of books available for children on many subjects and themes.
5. Become a trusted recommending source so that in time of difficulty teachers and parents approach you for suggestions of good books to read.
6. Talk with children as they read books. Develop an atmosphere in which people are encouraged to share both their personal and literary responses to books.
7. Never suggest a book that you have not read yourself.
8. Never attempt to rescue a child with a book.

9. Look for books that have activities, themes, or interactive questions for the reader.

When a young girl was referred for counseling by her foster parents, the counselor met individually with the child and had available a selection of books dealing with adopted and foster families. The counselor read *Zachary's New Home* (Blomquist, 1990) to the child and then discussed the story. Next the counselor had the child construct a home for Zachary out of art material. Using play dough, the counselor made a replica of the character in the book, Zachary, and asked the child to place Zachary somewhere within the house that they had built. The counselor then asked questions about what it was like for Zachary in that home. Using *Zachary's New Home* (Blomquist, 1990) and the art activities described above, the school counselor incorporated the use of children's literature into a guidance program serving three- and four-year-old children.

Intervention 3: Planning.

Finally, counselors used literature as part of individual planning activities within the comprehensive guidance program. Even children as young as three and four can begin career exploration, and children's literature can be used to expose children to a variety of different careers. *Guess Who?* (Leonard, 2000), a lift-the-flap book was used by the school counselor to introduce different careers to young children. After sharing the book with the children, the counselor showed the boys and girls some previously constructed hats that represented various careers from the story (chef, police officer, fire fighter, clown, etc.). The counselor invited children to volunteer to come forward to play a game in which the counselor chose a hat for the child to wear without him/her seeing the hat. The class would then give clues to the child with the hat on as to the kinds of activities a person having that job would do. The children enjoyed this interactive and fast-paced game. One of the particularly interesting hats was a scuba diver mask. Children used this as an astronaut or a diver. Many other non-traditional occupations may be introduced by bringing a variety of hats to the classroom to add to those occupations depicted in the book *Guess Who?*

Conclusion

In conclusion, literature can be used successfully to expand comprehensive developmental school guidance programs to promote healthcare literacy among very young children. Counseling programs that attend to the child's social and affective development using literature compliment early childhood development programs. This chapter has demonstrated how school counselors can successfully expand their services to pre-school age children and become instrumental in early prevention activities.

Annotated Bibliography

Managing Anger and Bad Days

Bang, M. (2000). When Sophie gets angry — really, really angry. New York: Scholastic.
Describes all the things Sophie does to feel better when she gets really, really angry. Includes colorful illustrations.

Everitt, B. (1992). Mean soup. San Diego, CA: Voyager Books, Harcourt Brace.
Mom helps Horace make a pot of mean soup to stir away a bad day. Creative artwork.

Mayer, M. (1983). I was so mad. New York: Golden Book Publishing.
Little critter wants to run away because he doesn't get to do any thing he wants to do all day long. Instead he decides to accept an invitation to play ball with friends.

Viorst, J. (1972). Alexander and the terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day. New York: Aladdin Books, Macmillan Publishing Company.
The day starts with gum in his hair and ends with the Mickey Mouse light burning out. Alexander learns some days are just bad.

Hyperactivity

Carlson, N. (1996). *Sit still*. New York: Puffin Books.
Patrick can't sit still, and his mother makes a plan to keep him busy.

Emotions

Curtis, J. L. (1998). *Today I feel silly & other moods that make my day*. Joanna Cotler Books, HarperCollins.
A child's emotions range from silly to grumpy to glad during the day. Includes attractive illustrations and a cardstock copy of child in which facial expressions can be changed.

Hajdusiewicz, Babs Bell. (1997). *Sometimes I feel happy, sometimes I feel sad: Poems and activities to help children understand their feelings*. Merrimack, NH: Options Publishing.
Provides activities to assist children in identifying and dealing with feelings.

Hajdusiewicz, B. B. (1996). *My faces*. Carlsbad, CA: Dominie Press.

Child can make many faces to express feelings- pouting, scary, merry etc.

Freymann, S., & Elffers, J. (1999). *How are you peeling?: Foods with moods*. New York: Arthur Levine Books, Scholastic Press.
Photography by Nimkin/Parrinello of fruit and vegetable sculptures representing all kinds of moods. Questions are asked of the reader/listener.

Career Awareness

Leonard, M. (2000). *Guess who?* HannaBooks, HarperFestival.
A lift the flap book inviting the child to listen to clues and guess who's behind the flap—police officer, farmer, clown, chef, doctor, fire fighter, and terrific kid.

Relationships

Heine, H. (1986). *Friends*. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, Simon & Schuster.
Friends Charlie Rooster, Johnny Mouse and fat Percy the Pig share everything but learn that good friends don't have to be together all the time. Addresses differences.

Mayer, G., & Mayer, G. (1998). *Just leave me alone*. New York: Golden Books Publishing.
Little Critter learns it is nice to be alone but that being with family can be more fun.

Noll, S. (1991). *That bothered Kate*. New York: Puffin Books.
Kate is bothered because her little sister wants to do everything Kate does, but she is also bothered when Tory has her own friends and doesn't follow Kate anymore.

Pfister, M. (1992). *The rainbow fish*. New York: North-South Books.
Rainbow Fish makes friends and finds happiness by sharing his shining scales. A prize-winning picture book.

Self Esteem

Gibala-Broxholm, J. (1994). *Let me do it!* New York: Bradbury Press.
Four-year-old Katie tries to be independent by performing tasks without help. Even though there are accidents, her mom, dad, and grandma are lovingly patient with her.

McBratney, S. (1994). *Guess how much I love you.* Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press.

Watercolor illustrations by Anita Jeram. Every night at bedtime little Nutbrown Hare tells his father, Big Nutbrown Hare, how much he loves him. Dad shows his son that he loves him even more.

Adoption

Keller, H. (1995). *Horace.* New York: Mulberry Books.

A mother and father tiger adopt a baby leopard that has many questions about why he is different. Questions are handled with sensitivity.

Diversity

Hamanaka, S. (1994). *All the colors of the earth.* New York: Mulberry Books.

A colorful book that celebrates the diversity of children. The story shows the relationship between skin color and the colors of the earth.

Divorce

Weninger, B. (1994). *Good-bye, daddy!* New York: Mulberry Books.

A young bear learns that even when father bear has to live in another home, the love and caring is still there.

Miscellaneous

Bourgeois, P. B., & Clark, B. (1995). *Franklin's blanket.* New York: Scholastic.

Franklin's bedtime ritual of a goodnight story, a goodnight hug, a glass of water, and his blue blanket is upset when he loses his blanket.

Note: The Franklin books are a source of stories about many childhood issues.

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Starker, S. (1988). Psychologists and self-help books: Attitudes and prescriptive practices of clinicians. *American Journal of Psychotherapy, 42*, 448-455.

Stulac, J. T., & Stanwyck, D. J. (1980). The revolution in counseling: A sociological perspective. *Personnel and Guidance Journal, 58*, 491-495.

Texas Education Agency. (1998). *A model developmental guidance and counseling program for Texas public schools: A guide for program development Pre-K to 12th grade* (3rd ed.). Austin, TX: Author.

Reference: Children's Books

Blomquist, G. (1990). *Zachary's new home*. New York: Magination Press.

Brown;, L., & Brown, M. (1986). *Dinosaurs divorce*. Boston: Little Brown & Co.

Leonard, M. (2000). *Guess who*? HannaBooks, HarperFestival.

Pfister, M. (1992). *The rainbow fish*. New York: North-South Books.

Rylant, C. (1989). *Mr. Griggs' work*. New York: Orchard Books.

Scarry, R. (1995). *Pig Will and Pig Won't*. New York: Random House.

Seuss, Dr. (1990). *Oh, the places you'll go!*. New York: Random House.

Testa, M. (1996). *Nine candles*. Minneapolis, Minn: Carolrhoda Books.

Appendix A

Lesson Plan for *Oh, the places you'll go!* (Seuss. 1990)

Lesson Title : *Oh, the places you'll go!*

Content Area: Achievement Motivation

Competency: Students will recognize that they are unique individuals with different experiences and that these experiences will provide them with insights into decision making throughout their lives.

Activities:

1. Have volunteers share experiences (positive and negative) that they have had in school. List these on the board and discuss similarities and differences among the students.
2. Have volunteers share an important decision they have had to make this year. List and discuss.
3. Solicit experiences and activities the children are looking forward to in middle school. List and discuss.
4. Have volunteers share any preconceived apprehensions/misconceptions regarding middle school. List and discuss. Try to clear up as many as possible.
5. Talk to the students about how we all have different experiences in life. It is these experiences that make us grow and enhance our abilities to make decisions. Use several balloons inflated with different amounts of air (blow them up, let them go and fall where they will) to show the students that we are all unique and have different experiences and will grow and advance at different paces in our school years. Also emphasize that decisions are not always easy, but they, too, challenge us to new heights and added responsibilities.
6. Read *Oh, the places you'll go!* by Dr. Seuss.
7. Solicit feelings regarding the book. Validate them.
   (This can be modified to use with new student groups in transition from one school to another.)

Appendix B

Lesson Plan for *The rainbow fish* (Pfister, 1992)

Title: *The rainbow fish*
Content Area: Interpersonal Relationships
Competency: Students will describe the process of making a friend.

Activities:

1. Discuss the qualities of friendship and the importance of friends. Allow students to name qualities they look for in a friend. Usually, the concept of sharing will be mentioned. Use this quality to introduce and read the book, *The rainbow fish*.
2. Process concepts of the book by discussing different ways the sea animals showed friendship. What messages did the Rainbow Fish send to the others at the beginning of the book? At the end of the book?
3. Summarize the lesson by asking the class how the Rainbow Fish felt at the beginning of the story compared to the end of the story. Even though he had given away something very precious to him, he realized that sharing his scales with others made him feel even more special than before.
4. Follow-up activities that are successful:
   a. I CAN SHARE sentence stem. Give students a small piece of foil for his fish. He/she can finish the sentence, color the fish, and glue on the silver scale.
   b. Talents activity write on the board, "My glittering scale can become a ..." Give each child a small piece of pre-cut foil (in the shape of a scale) and drawing paper. The student transforms his silver scale into a new object (it cannot be a fish). He/she completes the sentence and shares with the class. This is a transformation activity.
   c. Laminate large scales cut out of aluminum foil (3 - 4") and hand one out to each student. Encourage them, after the lesson, to practice sharing by giving the scale to another person, just like the Rainbow Fish.

Appendix C

Lesson Plan for *Pig will and Pig won't* (Scarry, 1995)

Lesson Title:	*Pig will, Pig won't*
Content Area:	Achievement Motivation
Competency:	Students will describe tasks he/she can accomplish at home.

Activities:

1. Ask students to name some of the different tasks or jobs they do at home and at school. After accepting different responses, point out that sometimes we like to do things and other times we refuse to do our chores. Tell them that you are going to read a short story about two little pigs named *Pig Will and Pig Won't*. Ask them to listen carefully to the story to see if they can tell how differently the two pigs acted and which pig had the better time.
2. Read *Pig Will and Pig Won't*
3. Have students talk about what they saw the two pigs doing. Explain that whenever we are asked to do something we have the choice of being a "Pig Will" or a "Pig Won't".
4. Ask the class which pig had the better day. Was it Pig Won't who refused to do anything and sulked around all day? Or was it Pig Will who was ready to help out and had a special outing along with the work?
5. Ask the students what lesson they could learn from *Pig Will and Pig Won't*. Encourage them to offer up different situations in which they could be a Pig Will and how they would feel if they were enthusiastic about helping out a home and school.
6. Suggest different brief scenarios (sitting still, finishing your work, brushing your teeth, picking up your toys). After each example have the class respond, "Pig Will".
7. Have students volunteer to be Pig Will and Pig Won't using hand puppets (constructed before the class session) and have them act out the scenarios.
8. Close the lesson by having each student hold the Pig Will puppet and tell one thing that they will do to cooperate at school or at home.

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